

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 161

By Montgomery

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Dr. Helen James upon her receipt of the 2010 LESN Recognition Award from the National Conference of State Legislators for her meritorious service to the Tennessee General Assembly.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to pay special tribute to those estimable legislative employees who, through their resolute actions, unqualified dedication, and exemplary service, win national acclaim and bring honor to the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable person is Dr. Helen James of the Office of Legal Services of the Tennessee General Assembly, who recently received the 2010 Legislative Education Staff Network (LESN) Recognition Award from the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) for her exceptional service to the legislature during the First Extraordinary Session of January 2010; and

WHEREAS, Dr. James was presented the award at the 2010 annual convention of the National Conference of State Legislators held in Louisville, Kentucky, and was also recognized in Portland, Oregon, for this honor by Governor Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota at the annual meeting of the Education Commission of the States, which sponsors LESN; and

WHEREAS, a career state employee with over twenty years of service after teaching at both the secondary and college level, Dr. James serves as the senior staff attorney for the Senate Education Committee, the House Education Committee, the K-12 Subcommittee, the Higher Education Subcommittee and the Joint Oversight Committee on Education in addition to having served as a second chair attorney on both the House and Senate Finance, Ways and Means Committees; and

WHEREAS, respected and admired by her colleagues and the members of this body, Dr. James is the authority on the Tennessee Lottery Scholarship Program, having drafted all enabling legislation and nearly all of the statutory revisions since its inception; and

WHEREAS, handling the extensive legal work for the General Assembly during the special session on education, Dr. Helen James's herculean work ethic, dedication to detail and remarkable legal mind were put to the test as this body enacted a comprehensive overhaul of its education statutes, both K-12 and higher education; and

WHEREAS, during the special session, Dr. James led the assigned legislative legal staff, oversaw all drafted legislation, drafted major amendments, and assisted sponsoring legislators, committee members, and legislative staff; and

WHEREAS, her efforts helped the State of Tennessee make major changes in education policy in numerous areas, leading to an ambitious and innovative Race to the Top proposal that proved to be a winner, much like Dr. Helen James; and

WHEREAS, a longtime resident of Nashville, Dr. Helen James is a graduate of David Lipscomb University and holds a Master of Arts, PhD in Mathematics and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Vanderbilt University; and

WHEREAS, Dr. James is an extremely giving citizen who is compelled to reach out with compassion to those whom life has treated unkindly; she epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, professional achievements aside, Helen James is fortunate to share both love and companionship with her husband, Jim Bob, and their son, Mike and his family, especially her two grandchildren, Tanner and Sophia; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Helen James has distinguished herself as a public-spirited servant of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to her community and the good people of the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, clearly deserving of the respect, admiration, and commendation of this General Assembly, Dr. Helen James is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Dr. Helen James upon her receipt of the 2010 LESN Recognition Award for her excellence in service to the Tennessee General Assembly and commend her honorable and astute service to the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.